

Fr. Cronin's "Extremists"

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speak for Cardinal Cushing, who, on December 6th, 1961, warned that, unless Americans are careful, they would soon find themselves "in the clutches of a Socialistic State," because "the central government has assumed unprecedented power and control over every State in the United States, and over every citizen in America." As if that were not enough, the Cardinal applauded the anti-Communist efforts of several rightist movements . . . They are well aware of the rapid advance of Socialism and Communism at home and abroad. They simply refuse to buy the Liberals' theory that the threat is not from subversion and infiltration, but rather from the military power of the Soviets.

Fr. Cronin emphasizes the "external" menace of Communism (in Europe, Asia, Latin America) while minimizing the "internal" danger. Actually, as M. Stanton Evans so lucidly demonstrates in a recent article the words "internal" and "external," strictly speaking, are meaningless in the struggle against Communism. "The Communist apparatus," he points out, "functions everywhere simultaneously, and takes no cognizance of national boundaries." Besides, "Conservative apprehension over an 'internal' danger usually means . . . the failure of Liberalism to grapple with the very 'external' danger it professes to fear." While a whole book would be needed fully to substantiate this charge of failure on the part of our Liberals, Mr. Evans' admirable summary proves his point very cogently indeed.

In his effort to minimize the Communist danger, Fr. Cronin informs us that in the United States the Party has now "reached its lowest ebb in terms of membership, finances and influences on American opinion and policy;" hence, it is comparatively "weak and impotent." This unrealistic view is not shared by, among others, J. Edgar Hoover who, as director of the FBI, should know the score. While Hoover admits that card-carrying members have diminished in number, he assures us that the threat they pose to the Nation is actually greater now than ever before. Besides, as the 1959 Report of the American Bar Association so cleverly pointed out, "it is just as false to measure the strength of Communism in the United States by comparing the small number of Party members with the larger number of non-Communists, as it would be to measure the seaworthiness of a ship by comparing the area of its holes with the area of its hull. A few strategically placed holes can sink the largest ship."

What are the means proposed by Fr. Cronin to fight Communism? "[We must] build national unity and moral strength. Practice [our] religion, concentrate less on denunciation and more on giving leadership." We must be men of "integrity," "work for racial justice and harmony," and so forth. These are all good things, to be sure but because they are only long-range antidotes, they fail to meet the danger here and now. In this context I cannot help recalling a little story told by the late Archbishop Noll some years ago in the pages of Our Sunday Visitor. It seems that a married couple was suddenly awakened one night by the presence of a thief in their room. The wife, petrified with fear, whispered to her husband to fetch his gun and force the intruder out. To which the husband calmly replied: "Darling don't be an extremist. The proper way to deal with problems is to go to the root. What we must do is to endeavor to raise the moral standards of our community; to combat economic injustices, to see to it that our schools impress upon our children respect for other people's property; and, above all, to become shining exemplars of honesty in our dealings with others. If we do these things, then there will be no thieves to worry about. Now, please go back to sleep."

As I ponder over the admonitions of Fr. Cronin and his fellow-Liberals, the following disturbing thought keeps haunting me: Our situation in this Country at the present time may well be parallel in some respects to the one in Cuba three years ago. Let me explain. Shortly after Fidel Castro took over, I spent a few weeks in Havana visiting relatives and friends. (Incidentally, I was born and raised in Cuba, although I have been an American citizen for quite some time.) On that occasion I had the opportunity to discuss the Castro revolution with many Cuban intellectuals, including the "elite" among the clergy, and even several Bishops. They were all one hundred percent for Castro. When I told them that, in my opinion, he was nothing but a Communist puppet who would eventually turn their country into a land of misery and slavery, they ridiculed me as an "alarmist"; they claimed I was seeing Communists under every bed; they boasted that Cubans, being great lovers of freedom, would never tolerate a Communist dictatorship. They assured me that Castro was simply carrying out the social teachings of recent Popes; that, besides, a good dose of Catholic (!) Socialism was just what Cuba needed to put an end to the exploitation and economic injustices so long abetted by the capitalists, etc. Well, as time went on, I saw everyone of my predictions literally fulfilled. And what ever happened to my Cuban critics? Does Fr. Cronin care to know? I'll tell him. Many of them, who were still able to do so, fled to Miami; others are agonizingly waiting for a plane reservation to follow suit. What a tragedy if their lesson should be lost on us! We ignore it at our peril.

REVIEW OF FR. CRONIN'S BOOK COMMUNISM: THREAT TO FREEDOM

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By Janet S. McLaughlin

Father Cronin's controversial pamphlet deserves to be carefully examined to see how it adheres to truth, reason and historical fact. When your child brings home an examination paper with a grade of 60%, you do not ordinarily commend him for his excellence in getting 3/5 of the problems right. You explain to him that 60% is not a passing grade, and then you point out the errors he has made in the hope that he might do better next time.

Consequently we do not feel it necessary to comment on those portions of the book which are right. However, adherence to a standard of truth compels one to point out his fallacies which are numerous and so basic to the pamphlet that it is a duty to list them.

(1) "The basic threat of Communism is external, not internal." (p. 47)

There has been great effort to make the American people believe this "made-in-Moscow myth." Like the magician who cleverly talks his audience into watching the wrong hand, the Reds want us to believe that the Soviet Union is only a military threat, and that our internal security should be relaxed in keeping with the Spirit of Camp David.

This hypothesis cannot be supported by the facts. The Communist threat is both external and internal, because Communism is an international conspiracy and recognizes no national boundaries.

The fact that makes the internal threat paramount is that the external threat IS internal. For example, the missile bases now being built on Castro's Cuba, 90 miles off the coast of Florida constitute an external threat. The internal threat is the United States policy which aided Castro to power and allowed shipments of Communist weapons and war materiel to be delivered to Cuba.

The great advance in nuclear weapons made by the Soviets, as proved by their

detonation of 40 nuclear bombs last Fall including the 50-megaton bomb, constitutes an external threat. The internal threat is the United States policy under which we unilaterally stopped nuclear testing for three-and one half years and thereby allowed the Soviets, by sneak-testing, to wipe out our margin of superiority..

Soviet scientific and space advances constitute another external threat. However, the theft of our scientific secrets is the internal threat. General Arthur Trudeau, Chief of Army Research and Development, stated: "I say without fear of contradiction that the advanced state of Soviet technology today is due more to Soviet success in espionage and subversion than it is to their scientific apparatus."

(2) "After 1950, a sharp decline set in. At the present writing, it is fighting for its very existence. . . ." (p. 21) "Consequently the Communist Party here is down to a few thousand members." (p. 30) "Problems (of domestic Communism) . . . were mostly solved by 1950." (p. 32)

The fact that Communist internal threat in the 1960's is greater than ever, has been confirmed by high American sources. On Sept. 24, 1961, Attorney General Robert Kennedy stated on "Meet the Press:"

"Communist espionage is more active now than ever before."

Herbert Philbrick said on Oct. 1, 1961:

"Numbers don't count. As one Communist told me: 'All we need is one in the right place at the right time.'"

Col. Rudolf Ivanovich Abel, the highest ranking Soviet espionage agent ever apprehended in the United States, spied for the Communists throughout most of the 1950's. In testifying about Abel before the House Appropriations Committee, Jan. 16, 1958, J. Edgar Hoover said: "I mention this case particularly . . . because there are some people who think that the matter of Soviet espionage is a thing of the past and no longer exists in view of the theme of peaceful co-existence the Soviets continue to expound."

The main reason why Father Cronin comes to the false conclusion that the threat of Communism died out in 1950 is because of his false assumption: He equates the Communist threat in America with the Communist Party. The popular belief that Communism in the United States is dwindling in power because the Party is dwindling in numbers shows a complete misunderstanding of Leninism.

Lenin's great contribution to Communism was his principle of the dedicated few. He coined the expression "the fewer, the better." He originated the Party of professional revolutionaries subject to military discipline. This is how Lenin was able to establish Communism with only 17 supporters and to take over Russia with only 40,000.

The real strength of Communism in the United States is in its underground apparatus plus the number of non-Communist organizations and individuals who will, either intentionally or unintentionally, collaborate with the Communists. For every Communist Party member, there may be 100 non-Communists who will do the work of the Communists.

The Communist apparatus faithfully follows the dictum laid down by Dimitrov at the Lenin School of Political Warfare: "Let our friends do the work. We must always remember that one sympathizer is generally worth more than a dozen militant Communists."

(3) "In the present climate of opinion, there is little danger that the Communist Party will achieve its goal of influencing American public thinking toward Soviet goals. It will not be able to shape the policy of our government." (p. 66)

This statement can be proved false even from Father Cronin's own pamphlet. On pages 62-3, Father Cronin correctly states